

SC BRIEFING

21 DECEMBER 1955

INDONESIA

1. President Sukarno is apparently attempting to bring down the Masjumi-led coalition of Prime Minister Harahap.

A. Sukarno opposes disciplinary action--proposed by Harahap and vice-President Matta--against Air Force officers responsible for (14 Dec) public defiance of government's authority.

B. 14 Dec incident took place at swearing-in ceremony for new cabinet-appointed deputy air chief.

1. Sukarno had approved appointment, but apparently not agreed to early installation of new deputy.
2. Air Force personnel made show of arms and broke up ceremony.
3. Air Force (17,000) has not previously been of political importance but lines now drawn are same as in

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earlier crises (Masjumi, Army, Matta on one side; National Party, Communists and Sukarno on the other).

- C. Another example Sukarno siding with PKI is 14 Dec speech, when he said exclude Communists from next Indonesian government, since supporters their ideology had polled 6 million votes.
- II. In address to an Air Force formation on 19 Dec, asking for "calmness and unity," Sukarno had at his side Air Force chief Suryadarma, who engineered incident; earlier, he had refused Suyadarma's resignation.
  - A. Cabinet weakening on earlier decision to take "strong measures"; no arrests yet made.
- III. Sukarno has strong motive for bringing down government in near future.

A. Some 20 members will be appointed to new parliament (to represent national minority groups); these 20 may hold balance of power.

1. Provisional constitution states these shall be appointed by "the government": both Harahap and Sukarno claiming privilege.

2. If Sukarno got a rubber stamp cabinet, dispute would become academic.

7. Harahap will resist pressure to resign, is backed by Hatta and the Army.

A. But as head of a many-party coalition government (due to resign when new parliament meets in Apr '56) his political position is weak.

B. He cannot count on full support of small-party coalition members when present parliament reconvenes (10 Jan).

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C. Moreover, early returns from 15 Dec  
voting for Constituent Assembly  
further tending to weaken his position.

1. These show National Party,  
Communists and Moslem NU all doing  
better than at comparable point in  
counting of September vote.
2. Harahap's Masjumi Party doing  
worse.